

Grade Point Average as a Predictor of Criminologist Licensure Examination Performance: Evidence from a Philippine Criminal Justice Education Institution

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ABSTRACT:

This study examined the Grade Point Average (GPA) of Bachelor of Science in Criminology graduates of Cagayan State University - Aparri Campus as a predictor to their performance in the Criminologist Licensure Examination (CLE), covering School Years 2021 to 2022 up to 2023-2024. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational design, this study used documentary data gathered from a total of 293 graduates from three cohorts: Batch 2022 with 84 graduates, Batch 2023 with 96 graduates and Batch 2024 with 113 graduates. Data on the graduates' academic performance were obtained from the Registrar's Office and their board examination ratings were taken from the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). Findings reveal that there is a significant positive correlation between CLE performance and GPA among all batches based on the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis. The dominant predictor of licensure examination performance for Batch 2022 is Crime Detection and Investigation based on the Multiple Regression Analysis and Criminology (CRIM) appeared to be the predictor of the same for Batch 2023 and Batch 2024. Regression models explained 28.1 percent to 39.2 percent of variation in licensure examination performance. These results verify that GPA is a reliable indicator of readiness in professional examinations, and it also emphasizes the big role of preparation in specific coursework in criminology towards the board examination. The study presents how the results may impact models of academic performance, alignment of the curriculum with the licensure examination competencies and the predictive value of GPA.

Keywords: Grade Point Average, Criminologist Licensure Examination, academic performance, licensure examination, criminal justice education, predictive validity

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INTRODUCTION

Relationship between professional licensure examination and academic performance has been an issue being contemplated by higher education institutions in the Philippines. As one of the major ways through which graduates can enter any criminology profession, the Professional Regulations Commission or PRC

administers the Criminologist Licensure Examination or CLE, which serves as a standard and instrumentation for graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Criminology program. Schools that offer this program frequently put effort in determining reliable factors that predict their graduates' success in the CLE. The Grade Point Average or GPA as a measure of

academic performance has been the subject of research. accordingly, a high GPA can influence outcomes after graduation, which includes employment, graduate studies and professional achievements (Tai, 2020). Moreover, Estrada (2016) verified that there is a direct relationship between academic performance and board ratings and Manalo (2024) found that academic performance is also a strong determinant of the outcomes in the licensure examination. In the same manner, Manonce and Maramag in 2020 discovered that there is a significant connection between a graduate's success in the teachers' licensure examination and college GPA. This is supported by Bongalosa et al, (2021) who found out that low academic performance associates with a low chance to pass the professional board examination. Although there is plenty of research about the predictive power of GPA on board examinations along teacher education, nursing and medical laboratory, this has not yet been extensively studied in the field of criminology in the Philippines, focusing on CLE performance. This is specifically noticeable due to the unique areas being tested in CLE that evaluate the graduates' preparedness in six core areas namely: Criminology (CRIM), Criminalistics (CTS), Crime Detection and Investigation (CDI) Law Enforcement Administration (LEA), Criminal Law and Jurisprudence (CLJ) and Correctional Administration (CA). These are prescribed by Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 05, Series of 2018. On the other hand, Republic Act No. 11131 or the Philippine Criminology Profession Act of 2018 requires that the passing general average of at least 75 percent should be achieved by the examinees without subject score falling below 60 percent. The College of Criminal Justice Education of Cagayan State University- Aparri campus has employed high academic standards through its screening process and the required minimum general weighted average of 85 percent per semester for students to be retained in the program. In spite of these measures, the performance of the College in the CLE has been inconsistent, which means that institutional standards and selection processes do not

necessarily result in success in the board examination. Hence, there is a need to further analyze how the students' GPA and academic performance across courses influence CLE results. This gap is addressed by this study by determining the correlation between CLE performance and GPA and revealing which subject-specific performance can predict licensure examination success. The findings provide clarity on the predictive validity of GPA in professional licensure examinations, which ultimately impact how curriculum and instructional policies can be improved in the field of criminology education.

FRAMEWORK

Two theories guide this study. First is the concept of Kuncel et al in 2021, which deals with academic performance as a way of measuring domain specific cognitive mastery. Through their extensive research, they prove that students' GPA in college has a meaningful predictive validity over their professional engagement. In the context of licensure examinations, GPA can act as a summative measure of how prepared a student is in undertaking standardized professional assessments. Second is the model of student success and institutional retention by Tinto (2017), which provides a similar view that students who excel academically and who achieve the aims of the program have more opportunities to succeed in their transitioning as professionals, including passing the licensure examination. A combination of these two theories suggests that the alignment of courses with the CLE competency domains can predict performance in licensure examinations.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used the descriptive-correlational research design. This design fits the study to determine the relationship between variables without manipulating conditions (Richardson et al, 2016). This was applied in the study by properly examining the associations between the CLE outcomes and academic performance of different batches of graduates.

Participants

The respondents of the study were the BS Criminology graduates of CSU – Aparri Campus during the School Years 2021 to 2022, 2022 to

2023 and 2023 to 2024 who took the Criminologist Licensure Examination based on PRC's official list of CLE Results. The table below shows the composition of these three cohorts.

Table 1: Distribution of Graduate Respondents by School Year

School Year	Number of Graduates
2021–2022 (Batch 2022)	84
2022–2023 (Batch 2023)	96
2023–2024 (Batch 2024)	113
Total	293

Data Sources and Collection

The main sources of this study's data were official documents. Data on the graduates' subject-specific grades in the six areas of the CLE were taken from their Transcript of Record acquired from the Registrar's Office of CSU - Aparri Campus. The graduates' GPA based on their general Weighted Average (GWA) were also acquired from the same office. Moreover, the graduates' board ratings per subject area were taken from the official records requested from the Professional Regulation Commission that cover CLE examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Measures and Interpretation Scales

Data on the academic performance of the graduates were analyzed using the scale:

97% to 100%	-	Excellent
93% to 96%	-	Very Good
88% to 92%	-	Good
83% to 87%	-	Satisfactory
75% to 82%	-	Passing

On the other hand, the graduates' CLE performance was interpreted with the scale:

97% to 100%	-	Excellent
91% to 96%	-	Superior
85% to 90%	-	Very Good

80% to 84%	-	Satisfactory
75% to 79%	-	Fair
74% and below	-	Poor/ Failed

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

To analyze the academic and licensure performance of the graduates, descriptive statistics were used, particularly frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean and standard deviations. To determine the linear relationship between GPA and CLE performance, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the correlations between CLE performance and the subject-specific academic variables as to their predictive contribution to their overall board rating at $\alpha = 0.01$ for correlational analyses and $\alpha = 0.05$ for regression coefficients.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Academic Performance Profiles across Cohorts

Across all six subject components of the CLE, the graduates' have consistent academic performance ranging from 'satisfactory' to 'good.' Criminology (CRIM) has the highest weighted mean of 87.89 to 88.30, followed by Crime Detection and Investigation (CDI) being the most consistent with the weighted mean of 86.32 to 88.08. these two subjects were identified as licensure predictors through the

regression analysis. This implies that the higher the academic performance along these areas, the better is the preparation of the graduates to succeed in the board examination.

Moreover, the graduates have predominantly satisfactory performance in the subject areas of CLJ with the weighted mean of 85.58 to 86.87, LEA with the weighted mean of 86.88 to 88.01, CTS with the weighted mean of 83.18 to 87.61 and CA with the weighted mean of 85.34 to 89.90. CTS exhibited the widest inter-cohort variation with the standard deviation range of

1.51 to 3.23. The variability in this laboratory-based area is supported by Albina et al.'s (2022) and Guadamor's (2024) findings that the quality and availability of instructional resources highly affect performance in criminalistic and forensic subjects.

Correlation between CLE Performance and GPA

Shown in Table 2 is the result of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis between the overall CLE performance of the graduates per cohort and their GPA.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between GPA and CLE Performance by Cohort

Cohort	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Batch 2022 (n = 84)	0.484**	0.000	Significant
Batch 2023 (n = 96)	0.450**	0.000	Significant
Batch 2024 (n = 113)	0.564**	0.000	Significant

Note. **Significant at the 0.01 level.

There is statistically significant positive correlation between CLE performance and GPA across all three performances at 0.01 level of significance. Based on the correlation coefficients, there is a moderate to moderately strong association between Batch 2023 ($r=0.450$) and Batch 2024 ($r=0.564$). Findings also reveal that there is a progressive increase of the correlation between CLE performance and GPA from Batch 2022 to batch 2024. This means that the alignment of the curriculum with the CLE improve from time to time proving that the institution's continuous refinement and implementation of effective instructional approaches over the study period have positive impacts on the graduates' CLE performance.

These findings are supported with several studies confirming the predictive power of GPA

on professional examinations. One is that of Kuncel et al. in 2021, which found that professional outcomes are predicted by college GPA and another is that of Amanonce and Maramag in 2020, which disclosed the same findings in the field of teacher education. This trend is now found to be true and relevant in the field of criminology through this study, proving that GPA highly predicts graduates' professional readiness.

Regression Analysis of the Subject-Specific Predictors of CLE Performance

To identify which subject-specific academic variables significantly predicted CLE outcomes, multiple regression analysis was conducted separately for each cohort. The regression coefficients for each of the batches are presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Coefficients for Batch 2022 ($R^2 = 0.316$, $F(6,76) = 5.853$, $p = 0.000$)

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-195.122	62.486	—	-3.123	0.003
CLJ	-0.113	0.545	-0.023	-0.208	0.836
CRIM	0.283	0.788	0.058	0.359	0.720
LEA	-0.295	0.559	-0.099	-0.527	0.599
CTS	0.129	0.694	0.035	0.186	0.853
CDI*	3.207	1.163	0.600	2.757	0.007
CA	-0.136	0.604	-0.033	-0.226	0.822

Note. * $p < 0.05$. Dependent variable: CLE total score.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Coefficients for Batch 2023 ($R^2 = 0.281$, $F(6,71) = 4.630$, $p = 0.000$)

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-104.498	49.169	—	-2.125	0.037
CLJ	0.332	0.651	0.070	0.510	0.612
CRIM*	1.925	0.795	0.507	2.421	0.018
LEA	-0.142	0.372	-0.069	-0.381	0.704
CTS	-0.051	0.568	-0.021	-0.090	0.929
CDI	-0.376	0.777	-0.115	-0.484	0.630
CA	0.380	0.538	0.167	0.706	0.482

Note. * $p < 0.05$. Dependent variable: CLE total score.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Coefficients for Batch 2024 ($R^2 = 0.392$, $F(6,96) = 10.316$, $p = 0.000$)

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-181.896	36.387	—	-4.999	0.000
CLJ	-0.103	0.385	-0.029	-0.268	0.789
CRIM*	1.524	0.594	0.308	2.567	0.012
LEA	-0.161	0.300	-0.051	-0.536	0.593
CTS	0.712	0.546	0.175	1.304	0.195
CDI	0.854	0.623	0.218	1.370	0.174
CA	0.147	0.363	0.049	0.404	0.687

Note. * $p < 0.05$. Dependent variable: CLE total score.

The results of the regression analysis yielded statistically significant overall fit across all three cohorts at 0.01 level of significance. Increasing progressively, the explained variance for Batch 2023 ($R^2 = 0.281$) increases with Batch 2022 ($R^2 = 0.316$) and to Batch 2024 ($R^2 = 0.392$). This

implies that the academic predictors being studied increasingly take effect on increasing number of graduates in their CLE performance, especially with the most recent cohort. Tino (2017) concurs with this pattern and explains that as the alignment between the curriculum

and the licensure exam improves; the more reliable predictors are the academic performance indicators become on success in professional examinations.

It is also important to note the shifting of the dominant predictor, particularly from CDI in Batch 2022 to CRIM in Batches 2023 and 2024. The dominance of CDI in Batch 2022 ($\beta = 0.600$, $p = 0.007$) emphasizes the investigative and applied nature of early programs, highlighting practical skills. Furthermore, the arising dominance of CRIM as the consistent predictor for Batch 2023 ($\beta = 0.507$, $p = 0.018$) and for Batch 2024 ($\beta = 0.308$, $p = 0.012$) shows a more extensive impact of the curriculum toward a more integrative and broader mastery of the areas. Capundan and Belarmino (2025) and York et al. (2015) second this claiming that success in professional examinations is reliably predicted by integrative academic performance, which highlights the value of holistic competencies beyond proficiency in single subjects.

IMPLICATIONS

This study's findings have great impact on the enhancement of academic performance vis-à-vis its effects on graduates' readiness in taking the licensure examination. Firstly, the consistently significant correlation between GPA and CLE performance across the three cohorts suggest a strong support for the valid predictive role of GPA in criminology education, a field known to have been focusing on practical demonstrations rather than academic competence as its way of ensuring quality education.

Secondly, the shift between subject areas as the dominant predictors of CLE performance among the cohorts prove the dynamism of instructional variables that may affect the CLE; hence, a balanced approach to ensure overall preparedness is desirable. This result is consistent with Richardson et al.'s (2016) meta-analytic conclusion that various academic and psychological aspects interact in predicting

examination performance, requiring studies of broader investigations across institutions.

Thirdly, the progressive predictive power based on the regression analysis across successive cohorts showcase that the efforts of the institution in aligning the curriculum with the competencies tested in licensure examination has positively affected the predictability of the graduates toward succeeding in the examination. Hence, constant curriculum alignment activities are crucial in achieving the optimum potential of students in passing the board examination.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that GPA is a predictor of CLE performance among the BS Criminology graduates of CSU-Aparri Campus. This is proven by the positive correlation between the cumulative GPA of the graduates and their licensure examination performance across all three cohorts. Crime Detection and Investigation and Criminology prove to be the major subject-specific predictors based on the results of the multiple regression analysis. Moreover, the increasing predictive power of the subject-specific performances across batches solidifies the claim that the predictive value of academic performance indicators strengthens with consistently improving curriculum-licensure alignment.

It is concluded that GPA is a valid indicator of readiness for professional examination in the field of criminology education, with emphasis that all subject areas should receive equal attention as the nature of the predictability of licensure performance changes over time. Research in the future may consider a wider scope focused on determining the predictive relationship of GPA and licensure performance among criminology institutions in the Philippines. These may also focus on other aspects that may influence licensure performance such as instructional quality, individual learner differences and participation in review programs.

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